

Adventure Central: Partnering for a Sustainable Community

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OVERVIEW

Adventure Central is a trusted, community-based, positive youth development partnership serving at-risk children and their parents in the West Dayton community for over 18 years. This nationally recognized program has been at the forefront of positive youth development providing children and families opportunities to change their lives through building positive well-being, higher academic performance, and less involvement in risky behaviors. Using nature, our high quality and diverse staff nurtures participants in life-changing activities that strengthen values, build lasting life skills, and empower youth to explore life's possibilities.

Youth are engaged throughout the year in a variety of delivery methods to include after-school, day camp, and residential camping experiences all emphasizing sustained long term relationships. Special programmatic emphasis is also placed on supporting and developing teens through high quality work, service learning and leadership experiences.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
&
FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS



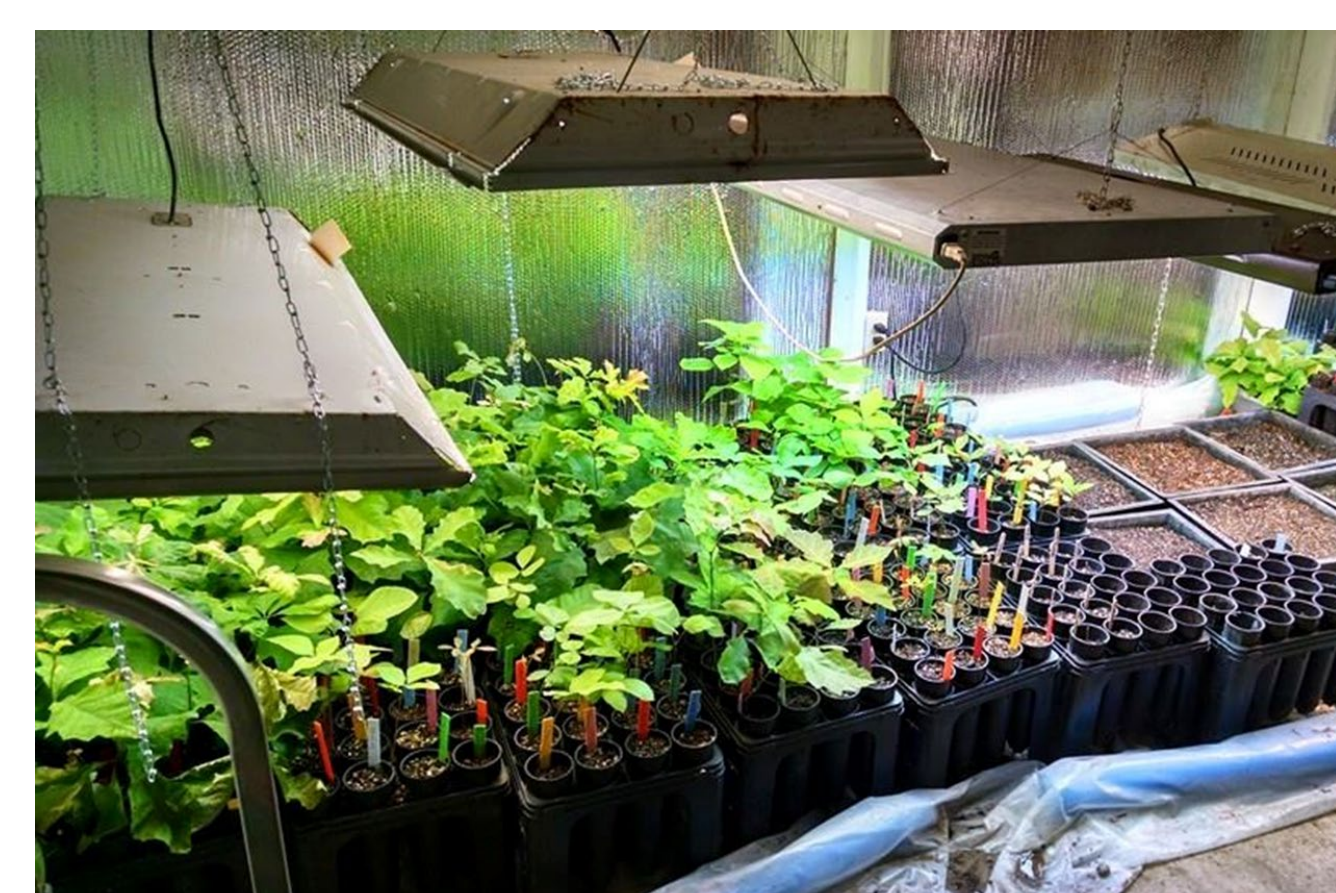
"PARTNERS IN POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT"



CURRENT INITIATIVES

Reforestation (2014-Present)

Older youth at Adventure Central have "Gone Nuts!" for the last three years and in the process have collected hundreds of gallons of native nuts and seeds, started over 4,000 seedlings (in our basement with confiscated grow lights from local law enforcement), and planted nearly 2,000 of these trees and shrubs in our very own Wesleyan MetroPark. This effort is part of a larger reforestation initiative within Five Rivers MetroParks to proactively combat the threat of invasive species to our forests. This project won the 2016 national NAE4HA Excellence in Natural Resources and Environmental Education award.



Adventure Central - By The Numbers

- 2 National 4-H Programs of Distinction
 - After School Program (2011)
 - Job Experience and Training Program (2009)
- 1 of 16 programs identified nationally as a Promising Practice in Urban 4-H Science (2011) More information at: <http://urban4hscience.rutgers.edu/>
- 70,000 contact hours annually
- 230 youth served annually
- Daily attendance: 95 (after school), 115 (day camp) M-Th
- Over 120 volunteers/supports annually contributing 13,000 hours of service
- 23 teens learned and practiced 21st century skills as part of the Job Experience and Training work-based learning program.
- 98% of parents "agree a lot" or "mostly agree" that Adventure Central staff are true partners in their child's education.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

Summer and After School Collaborative (2015-Present)

Adventure Central is one of 10 programs at 17 sites in Dayton and Trotwood who are working together with funders and key institutions to improve program quality at our out-of-school time programs.

Focus areas include:

- Student attendance
- Academic behavior and growth
- Family engagement
- Social emotional learning
- Healthy lifestyles

Using common evaluation tools, data on more than 1,100 children in the pilot year (2017-18) indicates youth and program staff are seeing positive engagement in learning and connections with program staff, two bedrocks for program quality.

Key findings indicate:

- About **3 in 4** students said the program helped them *get their homework done* and *make new friends*.
- **More than half** indicated it helped them *do better* and *try harder* in school.
- **More than half** felt the program helped them *read more often*, *do better in science and math* and *improved their writing*.

These after school programs provided almost 250,000 hours of programming in 2017-18.

IMPACT

Youth Leadership Exploration and Development (YLEAD) Study (2018)

Anderson-Butcher, Bates, Ferrari, and Volek

A growing interest in how adolescents can prepare for the workforce and give back to their communities has contributed to the development of positive youth development (PYD) programs focused on youth leadership. This study used a qualitative approach to explore what mechanisms and components support leadership development among youth participating in three different PYD programs in Ohio, including the Adventure Central Job Experience and Training work-based learning program.

Common themes across the three programs included the reasons youth became involved, skills developed as a result of their participation, and relationships built with peers and program staff. Notably, encouragement from an adult or peer, support from program staff and/or parents, and a desire to follow in the footsteps of older youth led to involvement in the programs. Youth participants reported they learned skills that they would use outside of the program and that would also continue to benefit them in the future. Specifically, skills included communication, public speaking, and interpersonal skills; teamwork; and problem-solving.

Participants in all three focus groups referenced the positive relationships gleaned from experiences and participation in activities with fellow program participants. In two of the groups where the youth had longer involvement with the same peer groups, youth referred to themselves as "family." Evidently, long-term involvement created a culture where youth felt their peers and program staff functioned as a major social support system in their lives.

